



Town of Rowe
Finance Committee Minutes
ALL BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, November 16, 2021–6:00 p.m.
Rowe Town Hall – Hearing Room 1

Finance Committee: Chair Dan Pallotta, Loretta Dionne, Wayne Zavotka (participating via remote), C. Selmi Hyytinen (participating via remote joined at 7:45 pm)

Board of Selectmen: Chair Charles Sokol, Vice-Chair Joanne Semanie

Present: Executive Secretary Janice Boudreau

Via Remote Participation: Assessors Chair Rick Williams, Treasurer Terry I Green, Highway Superintendent Lance Larned, Board of Health Chair Maggie Rice, Principal Bill Knittle, School Committee Chair Susan Zavotka, Fire Chief Dennis Annear, MLP Manager David Dvore, Park Manager Sean Loomis, Town Clerk Paul McLatchy III

Call to Order: Chair Pallotta called the meeting to order at 6:10 P.M.

Roll Call Vote: Wayne Zavotka – yes	Loretta Dionne – yes
Dan Pallotta – yes	C. Selmi Hyytinen – Absent
1 Vacant Position	

General Guidance for Budget Requests for All Departments & Committees:

Finance Committee Chair Dan Pallotta explained that the practice has been to keep department budgets at or below the 2.5 % to stay within the limit. He also asked for the capital requests be made for one, three or five years.

Update Personnel Wage and Salary Schedule:

Chair Sokol explained that the Selectmen had worked on the Wage and Salary Schedule for some time and made it available to use as a tool when hiring to determine the appropriate wage for any given worker. Through standardization wages would be fair and a way to predict the future in each position. He noted that in the past new hires have sometimes been overpaid with the replacement person starting by the wage of the person ending their employment, having inexperienced workers hired at a rate of pay as the experienced worker. By increasing the wages with Cost-of-Living Adjustments and adding longevity, employees will be receiving a more equitable pay. He stressed that it was up to the purview of the Board or Committee whether to use and that it be only a tool.

Committee/Board Reports for FY23:

Municipal Light Plant:

Municipal Light Plant (MLP) Manager David Dvore explained that he had a few more capital projects in the works and that he had money to pay for them, including a security monitoring system for the hut and a redundant system to have multiple paths to operate in the event of a blackout with the current system. The \$1000 dues to WiredWest would be in the budget as well as requesting a slight raise in his salary.

Town Clerk:

Town Clerk Paul McLatchy III reported that he was continuing to digitize town records and no major changes for the coming year.

Planning Board:

Planning Board Chair Paul McLatchy III said that it was difficult to move forward with bylaw updates due to a lack of the full board attending regularly.

Board of Health:

Board of Health Chair Maggie Rice said the roof over the compactor was a capital project and painting all the refuse gardens buildings. Chair Rice said they were still hoping to hire a Nurse in the near future.

Park:

Park Manager said he was working on a grant to purchase a replacement for the Polaris Ranger with winter equipment. The cost to replace would be \$35,000.00. He had discussions with the school to see if the vehicle could be shared. The cost to redo the tennis courts was unknown at this time. The Park Commission was investigating Mass Trail Grants to bring some additional funding. The Parks Commission was also looking into Conservation grants, however, first an Open Space Plan needed to be formulated and Chair Laurie Pike has been seeking volunteers to form an Open Space Committee who might be committed to working on the plan. The Soule Barn was getting some needed repairs which stored Park equipment in the winter and more work will be needed.

School:

The School reported that there were some changes in the Superintendent's Office and that the Business Manager was leaving as well as another person which will cause some disruption. The School took advantage of the grants available from Covid Relief funds and replacing the math program. There was a desire to add solar panels to the roof, however, no grants have been identified for the purpose as yet.

Fire Department:

Fire Chief Annear reported obtaining an \$8500.00 grant for water rescue equipment. The fire gear and equipment has been moved out of the restrooms. Chief Annear was planning to replace the generator next Spring. The new Fire Truck has been put out to bid and it might be a year delay in delivery. There has been new LED lighting for the training room and a grant for a video conferencing system for the training room. They have applied for a headset system to improve communications while on scene in an emergency.

Highway Department:

Highway Superintendent said he would like to have more funding for paving projects in the future. A paving management system was discussed.

Board of Assessors:

Chair Williams reported that Great River Hydro, Bear Swamp and National Grid applied for abatements for FY19, FY20 and FY21 which are needing review in Appellate Tax Board (ATB). Until the abatements are resolved, funds must be set aside in the event of a judgement in favor of the companies in the Overlay Account.

Chair Williams said it was a revaluation year and that appraisals are up from the prior year due to higher real estate sales being higher.

Treasurer/Tax Collector:

Terry Green said that she continues to need to put in more hours than what her salary is based on and is performing some duties in both positions that have not been done in the past. She also indicated that the Tax Collector budget was not adequately funded, and software updates were ignored.

COLA

The Cost-of-Living Adjustment was discussed by Chair Sokol who advocated a goal of staying with the 2.5% target increase.

Finance Committee:

Chair Pallotta said there needs to be a fifth member on the Finance Committee. Issue not yet resolved.

Adjournment:

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Pallotta made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:36 p.m. The motion was seconded by Wayne Zavotka.

Roll Call Vote: Wayne Zavotka – yes
Dan Pallotta – yes
1 Vacant Position

Loretta Dionne – yes
C. Selmi Hyytinen – yes


Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Boudreau, Executive Secretary

Approval Date: *Nov 9, 2022*

Approved:


Dan Pallotta, Chair


Loretta Dionne


Wayne Zavotka

C. Selmi Hyytinen

Documents:

1. Agenda November 6, 2021
2. Wage & Salary Chart
3. Wage & Salary Worksheet